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HON. ROSCOE CONKLING:

THE

STATESMAN, ORATOR, AND JURIST,

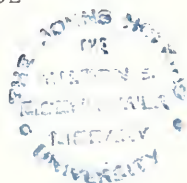
AND

THE ADVOCATE

OF

Freedom—Humanity—Justice—Equal Rights!

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1876

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HIS RECORD:

1. THE GREAT BATTLE—FREEDOM VS. SLAVERY—DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT VS. THE FOES OF FREEDOM AND EQUALITY.

“If, besides being powerful, a people has set up institutions in which no trace of aristocracy or kingcraft is tolerated, it has voluntarily elected to make its own soil the theater of a contest which has been waging since time began between oppression and liberty. It is the mission and fore-ordained destiny of a people assuming to found and maintain a democratic government, to wrestle and grapple with the foes of freedom and equality within and without; and the struggle now raging in America is only the old battle for human rights transplanted from the Old World to the New.”—(Speech of Roscoe Conkling, at mass-meeting in Union Square, N. Y., April 11, 1863.)

In this grand battle for human rights—of “liberty” against “oppression,” of “democratic government” against “the foes of freedom and equality”—no champion has borne a more brilliant or distinguished part than ROSCOE CONKLING—none whose battle has been waged with greater ability or power, or crowned with grander victories for the victims of tyranny.

2. THIRTY-SIXTH CONGRESS—THE BEGINNING OF THE REBELLION.

MR. CONKLING entered Congress—the House of Representatives—in December, 1859. The Republic was in the presence of an alarming crisis—menaced by a great peril. Oligarchal “turbulence” had “festered into rebellion.” For thirty years the Democracy had conspired for the destruction of the nation; it had been the mischievous tool, the active diabolical agent, of the oligarchy in foreign wars—wars of

conquest—in the prostitution of the blood and treasure of the nation for the aggrandizement of slavery, the perpetuity of that “sin of sins,” the enlargement and consolidation of that vilest of all forms of oppression and tyranny, that crime against God and man, domestic slavery. These Democratic “breeders of sedition,” these oligarchal “apostate Americans,” were now in open revolt for the destruction of the Union, or, as Mr. CONKLING describes it, in an attempt “to shrivel like a parched scroll” “this bright vision of constitutional liberty, which fills all Christendom with light and hope;” to bury free institutions in the waves of revolution, and leave the annals of self-government like a bloody buoy on the sea of time, warning the nations of the earth to keep aloof from the mighty ruin.”

Treason and panic ruled the hour. Treason ramified and infernally active in Congress and throughout every department of the Government. Many of the truest and best—the bravest—hesitated, wavered. Many in that fearful hour were even for compromise. Not so ROSCOE CONKLING.

3. NO COMPROMISE WITH SLAVERY OR TREASON—NO PARLEY WITH TRAITORS.

In a conflict where human rights were involved, in which the integrity and life of the nation were imperilled, Mr. CONKLING had “no compromises to offer, no terms to talk about—none until the insurgents return to their allegiance, haul down their palmettoes and pelicans, doff their cockades, and wear, as we do, not the livery of treason, but the garb of citizenship and submission to the laws.” He had “heard such concessions called ‘tubs thrown to whales,’” but he called them “planks thrown to the mob,” and had never “heard of a mob less deserving to be dallied with, according to his apprehension, than that which had seized the possessions of the Government, snatched its property and its money, and fired upon its flag.” Concessions to such would be “a confession of impotency,” an “offer of bounty to popular clamor and insubordination.”

Accordingly, (January 30, 1861,) in the presence of the conspirators, armed and in belligerent array, in the House of Representatives, ROSCOE CONKLING, with a courage equalled by his indignation, with the ability of a statesman, sagacious and far-seeing, and the fearless utterances of a patriot—a lover of man—denounced the treason of the Democracy—the revolt of the proslavery oligarchy. He scoriated Buchanan for the betrayal of the nation. The “avowed reasons” of the revolt were only “the excuses—sad, pitiful excuses—of designing and desperate men: the subterfuges and makeshifts of unholy and baffled ambition.” He declared—

“The true reason of the revolt is, that, by the sentiment of an overwhelming majority of the people of the Republic, slaveholding, as a moral proposition, is outlawed and abhorred; that assent to slavery, as a policy to be fostered, has forever ceased to be national in this country.”

A new era had dawned—the era of Freedom and Equality. No more wars of conquest at the command of the “*Proslavery Propaganda*.” No further humiliation or degradation of freedom and the nation before the sanguinary old Moloch, domestic slavery. In vain did the Hindmans attempt to stifle his utterances—to intimidate the man. He said:

“It is charged upon the North, sir—and I am going to speak with great frankness upon this subject—it is charged upon the North that at the fireside, on the pavement, in the school-house, slavery is held to be a moral, social and political evil. The charge is true, sir: every word of it. A large majority of the people of the North, no matter of what political party, look upon slavery as an insatiate monster. They do not see it in its patriarchal aspects, but they see an iron-heeled, marble-hearted, oppressor, demanding always three victims—the slave, the master, and the land.

“In this regard the people of the North agree exactly with the whole Christian world—the slave-holding States of this blood-bought, liberty-founded Republic alone excepted.

“Why, sir, the jurisprudence of the world is against slavery.

“The literature of the world is against slavery.

"The civilization of the world is against slavery.

"Mr. Webster once said, speaking of another subject :

"The lightning is strong, the tornado is strong, the earthquake is strong, but there is something stronger than all of these. It is the enlightened judgment of mankind."

"That, too, is against slavery.

"A great man has said, 'Let me write the songs of a people, and I care not who makes their laws.' And the songs, the poetry, and even the fine arts of the world are against slavery."

4. FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW—PERSONAL LIBERTY LAWS—"THE HIGHER LAW."

While lashing with brilliant and indignant rhetoric the injustice and oppression—the tyranny—of the fugitive slave law, and defending the personal liberty laws of the North, Mr. CONKLING at the same time eloquently maintained "the higher law." He said:

"Sir Edward Coke proclaimed, when the name of Coke bore great sway in England, as it has done since in the world—I quote the substance of his language from recollection—that laws of Parliament conflicting with the laws of God were to be held utterly for naught. * * * * I affirm that the love of liberty, the detestation of oppression, the unquenchable hatred of tyranny, which lies at the foundation of the anti-slavery sentiment of the North, is a law which cannot be suspended by Congressional compromises, nor repealed except by that great legislator whose enactments quicken and still the pulses, and grasp and regulate the subtle essences of human life."

5. THEN, AS NOW, A CHAMPION OF FREEDOM AND EQUAL RIGHTS.

Such was ROSCOE CONKLING at the beginning of his public life: such were his principles and attitude before the nation—a statesman and patriot, a fearless advocate of Liberty and Equality; and such has been his attitude and principles throughout his long public career, as remarkable for its con-

sistency as for its brilliancy and vigor—its masterly statesmanship—as witnessed by his support before the country and in Congress of Lincoln and Grant—of those great charters of American Freedom and Equality, the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, the Civil Rights Bill, and all kindred measures! Such to-day is ROSCOE CONKLING!

6. THE GREAT STRUGGLE FOR LIBERTY AND EQUALITY.

In the great and elaborate debates in the Senate, particularly those of 1866, the special session of 1867, and those of 1869, in which the principal actors were men such as Chas. Sumner, O. P. Morton, Carpenter, Reverdy Johnson, Lyman Trumbull, Wm. Pitt Fessenden, Howard, Edmunds, and the Morrills—all eloquent and able debaters, all profound and learned as jurists, and equally distinguished as statesmen—among such as they, ROSCOE CONKLING ranked as the peer of the greatest: as a statesman and a jurist, in ability and learning, equal to the ablest—in patriotism inferior to none, while none surpassed him in the earnestness, the eloquence, the courage, the zeal with which he battled for Liberty, Equality, Justice to all—to men of every race and color.

7. RECONSTRUCTION.

Mr. CONKLING demanded that reconstruction should be complete, and secured upon a basis which would endure and baffle all hostility of every character. He wanted no half-way or doubtful work. Hence he opposed and denounced Andrew Johnson in all his iniquitous efforts to defeat reconstruction—to wrest the authority of the nation to a support of the rebel and traitor, to cheat the nation out of all the fruits of its victory over the rebellion, and to trample ruthlessly upon the rights of Southern loyalists—to again place the shackles upon the colored man, and prostrate the nation at the feet of the oligarch.

As a partial plan towards the end he labored for, Mr. CONKLING, in 1866, introduced into the Senate the following:

"1. The absolute renunciation of all the pretensions and evasions of secession as a doctrine and as a practice.

"2. The repudiation both by the State and by the National Governments of all public debts and obligations, including State and municipal liabilities contracted or assumed in aid of the late rebellion, including also all claims by or on behalf of those who were in the military or naval service of the insurgents, for bounty, pay, or pensions, and all claims by persons not loyal to the United States, for damages or losses suffered by reason of the rebellion, and for advances made in its aid.

"3. The assurance of human rights to all persons within their borders, regardless of race, creed, or color, and the adoption of such provisions against barbarism, disorder, and oppression as will relieve the General Government from the necessity of standing guard over any portion of our country, to protect the people from domestic violence and outrage.

"4. The impartial distribution of political power among all sections of the country, so that four million people shall no longer be represented in Congress in the interest of sectional aggrandizement, and, at the same time, be excluded from political privileges and rights.

"5. The election of Senators and Representatives in truth loyal to the United States, and never ringleaders in the late revolt, nor guilty of dastardly betrayals which preceded the war, nor of atrocities which cannot be extenuated. (1st Sess., 39th Cong., pt. 1, p. 252.)

The work was necessarily surrounded with immense difficulties. Governments of law were to be created by military agencies, and would be assailed from every possible quarter. Every flaw would be detected and magnified; every technical and legal advantage taken; every vacuum in the work would be seized upon and widened for purposes of mischief, under the cry of military tyranny. The military would be ultimately withdrawn, and the courts would become the final arbiter. The work demanded the exercise of every vigilance—all the intelligence and sagacity of the ablest and best. Hence Mr. C. proposed by his measures, at the very

threshold of reconstruction, to induce a majority of all the voters, white and colored, in the disloyal States, to register in the elections of conventions, and to force from a majority of the voters so registered, in the constitutions formed, an absolute and unqualified assent to or ratification of provisions or terms, upon the radical theory of freedom and justice. He wanted hereafter no upheaval by disloyal courts of the work of loyal rehabilitation. He proposed that the nation should take no chances. Thus he vigilantly watched every measure of reconstruction, whether by friend or foe. He scrutinized their every expression, as well as their general purpose and scope—every technicality or term—as a means of avoiding subsequently “all twinges of legal conscience,” “all obstructions of judgment,” “all tender-footed hesitations,” and earnestly and eloquently labored for a reconstruction that would stand the courts—every ordeal to which he knew it would be subjected, and by which it would be imperilled, and thus, upon a permanent or enduring basis, to secure to the nation—to all classes of our citizens—the grand fruits of the victory so dearly bought of civilization and freedom over the savage old Moloch, slavery, and the equally fell destroyer, oligarchal Democracy. It was an immense labor, ambitiously, intelligently, sagaciously performed in the interest of self-government and humanity.

8. THIRTEENTH AMENDMENT—EMANCIPATION.

MR. CONKLING was not in the Thirty-eighth Congress, which passed the Thirteenth Amendment, “uprooting slavery by constitutional provision,” but, before the country and people, he gave it an open, earnest, and able support. He had, in the session of 1862, prior to its adoption, supported in the House Mr. Lovejoy’s bill for abolition—to secure freedom to all persons within the exclusive jurisdiction of the National Government, and had, at the same session, supported the several measures for emancipation, whether gradual or immediate, in Maryland, West Virginia, and

Missouri. He had vindicated Mr. Lincoln's Proclamation of Freedom, as he had emancipation in the District of Columbia. He therefore earnestly believed in the principles of the Thirteenth Amendment. He rejoiced in its passage and applauded its purpose.

9. FOURTEENTH AMENDMENT—HUMAN RIGHTS.

The Fourteenth Amendment, "giving human rights to all men, equalizing representation in Congress between the North and South, excluding from places of trust the ring-leaders of the rebellion, guarding our public debt, and guarding against the debts of the Southern Confederacy"—for the adoption of that amendment Mr. CONKLING labored in Congress and before the people with indefatigable intelligence and zeal. It was necessary as a measure of reconstruction—beneficent, wise, and just in itself.

10. FIFTEENTH AMENDMENT—SUFFRAGE—POLITICAL RIGHTS.

With the Fifteenth Amendment, "ordaining that men qualified in all else should not be denied the right to vote merely because of their complexion," Mr. CONKLING was not wholly satisfied when it was introduced into Congress. He voted for it upon its passage and advocated its adoption before the country; but he dreaded the ingenious deviltry of the oligarchal foe. He wanted no abortions. He endeavored to have it amended—to make it clearly express and proclaim the purpose it was designed to accomplish—"to put, upon an equality with Saxon men, men of African descent." Some objected to saying it in so many words. But why? He did not; nor could he appreciate any good reason why. He said "he would consider it a great calamity in itself, and especially a great calamity after all the precious time that has been devoted to this subject, if we should come to a lame and impotent conclusion—if we should submit an amendment which, assuming it be carried, would be wholly inad-

equate to the object after which we are reaching." He was overruled, and, of course, accepted the best that was offered.

11. ABRAHAM LINCOLN—ULYSSES S. GRANT—ROSCOE CONKLING.

By both Abraham Lincoln and General Grant Mr. CONKLING was honored as a high-minded and trusty friend, and their friendship and trust he returned by a vindication of both against all assailants—brilliant, convincing, irrefutable: that for Abraham Lincoln all through the campaign of 1864, and no man ever had an advocate abler or more brilliant than General Grant in ROSCOE CONKLING all through the campaign of 1872. Mr. CONKLING's vindication of General Grant (in his "Grant and his Defamers—Deeds against Words") at Cooper Institute, New York, July 23, 1872, is one of the noblest monuments ever erected by one man to the deeds and fame of another. In his speech at Utica, New York, February 26, 1864, in defending the policy of President Lincoln, he also states his own. He says:

"He [President Lincoln] has said that the institution of human slavery in America shall be drowned in its own blood!

"He has said that in order to overthrow the present rebellion the shackles shall fall from the slave!

"He has said that, to prevent any such rebellion in future, those shackles shall never again be replaced!

"He has said that the slave interest, not content with ruling the country with a rod of iron for fifty years, has undertaken to destroy it, and that 'whoso taketh the sword shall perish by the sword!'

"He has said that he will hold no treaty with pirates, murderers, and thieves, but to the *masses* of the South he extends a full and free pardon upon their returning to their allegiance!

* * * * *

"The President has also said, and Congress has said, that those who will not return shall forfeit their property—

"That it shall be confiscated and sold, and the money paid into the Treasury to apply on the debt which the North alone would otherwise pay! * * * *

"That taxes shall be laid on all rebels' lands, and collected as fast as our armies advance, taxes laid on and collected with an unsparing hand, and

"That, as far as possible, the national debt shall be collected from those who have brought it upon us!

"There is also a proposition to cut up the plantations of traitor patroons, and give them as homesteads to our soldiers!

"All these things are parts of the policy of the President, and for one I approve them all. I am willing that a friendly hand shall be at all times extended to the masses if they repent and return; but I insist that an iron hand should be laid upon the leaders, and all those who, after offers of pardon, persist in the most diabolical crime of modern times."

12. AMNESTY AND EQUAL RIGHTS.

In the great struggle of the session of 1871-'72, when Mr. Sumner moved his civil rights bill as an amendment to the amnesty bill, Mr. CONKLING was among his ablest coadjutors. "No Amnesty without Equal Rights!" Andrew Johnson's attempt at general amnesty by wholesale pardon Mr. CONKLING had denounced as unconstitutional and iniquitous. Treason comprehended all other crimes. With equal propriety, therefore, "the Governor of New York might not only pardon culprits charged but not convicted of offense, but might proclaim or ordain or enact that all persons whatsoever at the time suspected of murder, arson, treason, or burglary, be forever invested with immunity from punishment." Such a power, like Tetzels, was in the nature of an indulgence—a power to dispense immunity in crime.

But Mr. CONKLING was not opposed to amnesty to the people. The ringleaders in the rebellion—the red-handed conspirators who for years had plotted the ruin of the Republic, who by their duplicity and arts had duped the multitude into revolt, and had convulsed the nation in carnage, blood, and crime—all such he literally abhorred: for such traitors he had only punishment. The property of all such he would confiscate, and devote, "as far as the Constitution would allow," "to defray the expenses of quelling" the re-

bellion. He favored amnesty to the masses—such an amnesty as Lincoln and Sumner advocated—but amnesty, under no circumstances, without equal rights.

Hence, in the struggle which followed Mr. Sumner's motion, at the session of 1871-'72—in the conflict between amnesty, immunity in treason, supported by Thurman, Trumbull, Bayard, Stevenson, and Garret Davis, against human rights—Mr. CONKLING would concede nothing, not even the slightest detail. "No Amnesty without Equal Rights!" In this great debate, in which he encountered the ablest of the oligarchal champions, Mr. CONKLING's splendid abilities as a debater, his genius as an orator, his profound knowledge of law and skill as a jurist, his statesmanlike qualities, were brilliantly conspicuous in harmony with his unquenchable, his noble love of justice and right, and upon every vote his stands recorded with Mr. Sumner's for equal rights.

Amnesty might be a grand thing, a glorious thing, "as an act of crowning grace" "to men who are walking monuments of the mercy and magnanimity of the American people;" but Mr. CONKLING was not so deeply impressed with its importance—with the necessity of any particular speed in its passage. In his "judgment" it was "quite as important that Frederick Douglass, to whom reference was made, should be permitted to go unabused and undegraded, without let or hindrance, as that Jefferson Davis should be allowed on Christmas, or any other day, to govern the orphans and cripples he has made, or to govern the people of this country he has burdened with taxes?" Hence with him, "No Amnesty without Equal Rights!"

Subsequently, at the same session, when the Democratic leaders in the Senate, irrepressible and indefatigable in support and vindication of oligarchal treason, revived amnesty, and attempted to rush it through the Senate, Mr. CONKLING peremptorily called a halt! Again he demanded that Equal Rights should go hand in hand with Amnesty—that the adoption of equal rights should precede that of amnesty. He was inexorable. He said: "Let us vote first on civil

rights, then amnesty may be acted on" and announced: "You can make no end of civil rights by legislation here." He warned them that "if civil rights be defeated," then amnesty should fall. There was no avoiding the alternative. By an attitude so determined, maintained with great ability, again he succeeded. Amnesty passed, but preceded by the adoption of Equal Rights.

13. LOUISIANA.

After years of turbulence, bloody insurrection, social tyranny, and violent crimes of every degree and character, the oligarchal Democracy, the old Confederate leaders and their clans, in January, 1875, again plotted to seize by violence the government of Louisiana. They failed. The patriotism and vigor, the prudence of Generals Grant and Sheridan, baffled the plot, and overwhelmed the brutal conspirators with disgrace and contempt. Nevertheless, in the Senate of the United States, an attempt, as disgraceful as that by their confreres at New Orleans, was made by the oligarchal leaders of that body—Thurman, Bayard, Hamilton, and Schurz—by violent resolutions and still more violent philippics, to fasten upon Grant, Sheridan, and the Republicans a responsibility for all the violence, the revolutionary proceedings, and the use of the military in the organization of the Louisiana Legislature. The springing of the whole plot, at Washington, as at New Orleans, was a complete surprise to the Republicans. None but the Democracy were posted in the facts, and for days they declaimed violently against Grant, Sheridan, and the Republicans.

At the brunt of their onslaught, Mr. COCKLING took the floor, and in a speech which will long be remembered in the Senate, discomfited the assailants, and covered them and their plot with confusion and shame—in a speech which has been described as one which will rank and live with the grandest forensic efforts of the Senate in the palmy days of its eloquence and genius, for its fearless utterances, its

splendid diction, its vigorous and manly eloquence, its profound knowledge of the law and its ability in its application, its withering sarcasm, its masterly skill in dissecting the mass of demagoguery, falsehood, and fraud built up with elaborate care by the oligarchal champions, and its inexorable and crushing logic, displaying and illustrating alike the higher qualities of the statesman, orator, and jurist. It certainly was a masterly performance—able, manly, searching, sarcastic, and effective. No just conception of its ability and power can be conveyed in our brief space.

In reply to Thurman's "special plea"—his "carping criticisms of the constituted authorities of the country"—and after exposing the effort at "sensation and prejudgment" by premature "denunciation," "accusation and assertion," Mr. CONKLING says :

"One passage, apparently a passage less studied than some others, in the speech of the honorable Senator, was pregnant with disclosure. He said in effect, I do not quote his words, 'If such be the condition of the South it is time that the party which through the war and since the war has guided affairs should give way, and let another party come in.' Ah, Mr. President, there is the key to the political secrets of the managers of the South and of the North ever since fighting ceased. There is the clew which unravels the web; there is the gospel of party as whispered and muttered from the beginning of the effort to reconstruct the South. Make reconstruction a miscarriage, refuse to aid it in good faith, thwart it, baffle it, make the worst of it, keep up unending agitation, disturb, foment, revolutionize, and the time will come when the country, wearied and worn with commotion, will accept anything for a change!"

Here is the whole plot—its causes and its objects. The whole affair was a surprise to General Grant and the Senate. Mr. CONKLING says, most significantly :

"The first information General Grant received was simultaneous with that of other citizens. The newspapers of the following day were his first informants. He had no expectation or apprehension in advance. *If there were those in Washington, or nearer Washington than the limits of Louisiana, who had notice that revolution was to be attempted on the 4th of January, the President of the United States was not one of them.*

He therefore had made no provision for such a contingency, and no preparation for the tidings of the event."

The Republicans at New Orleans were equally blameless: they were the victims of a deliberate and characteristic plot of the Democracy to seize the government of Louisiana by lawless and revolutionary violence, instigated by "hatred of suffrage and equal rights for black men," by men who are "walking monuments of the mercy and magnanimity of the American people, and ever blustering about their rights, and by deeds of violence keeping the South in increasing turmoil." That Mr. CONKLING drives mercilessly home by the stunning force of irrefragible proof—of proof multiplied upon proof. He unravels with relentless skill the tangled web of sophistry, falsehood, and fraud, so elaborately woven by Thurman, Bayard, Hamilton, and Schurz; examines in detail every incident in the organization of the House at New Orleans on the 4th; exposes with accumulative proof the prearranged revolutionary violence of the Democracy, its execution "by armed janizaries with gilded lapels," "brandishing knives and pistols;" the helplessness of the Republicans, utterly surprised and unprepared for the crisis; the demand and use of the military by the Democracy in the first instance in consummating their plotted villainy; the action of the military—three men in uniform, De Trobriand and two of his staff; their prudent but decisive proceedings at the call of the legal authorities in quelling the Democratic infraction of the laws—their violent breach of the peace—which resulted in the restoration of the legal Republican majority in the House, and the defeat of the revolutionary plot of the Democracy: all this with terrible satire and inexorable logic, in the light of established facts and the law, and in turn arraigns the oligarchial leaders. He says:

"In the American Senate no Democratic Senator rises to denounce or reprobate the proceedings"—not even to reprobate "acts which have tarnished the escutcheon of the nation and affrighted humanity."

"The Senate rings with denunciation, but it is all of those whose rights were trodden under the feet of violence and fraud." * * * * *

"I know that Mr. Buchanan and others talked in a deprecating way about rebellion. I know that now Democratic Senators with extenuating holiday and lady terms deprecate assassination. The Senator from Ohio [Mr. Thurman] speaks of inhuman butcheries and burnings as 'homicides not authorized by law.' Is that the terse vigor which will make desperadoes halt and quail? * *

* * Sweeping denunciations, opprobrious imputations, continual disparagement of the national authorities, only stir and fan the smoldering embers of sectional hate. They will not pacify the South; they will not carry the next presidential election. They are dragon's teeth, and they grow into lawless vengeance."

In a splendid vindication of Generals Grant and Sheridan, he shows them guiltless of all wrong, or attempted wrong, and paints and reprobates with indignant eloquence the diabolical violence and crimes of the oligarchy. He says:

"Search the annals of bigotry and intolerance, read the tearful story of 'man's inhumanity to man,' and where in modern times can you find an instance of such God-daring and man-hating malignity as this statement uncovers? Louisiana, including her chief city, has been for years a dark and bloody ground, from which victims by the thousand have been carried to the grave."

There is but one cure:

"Dismount masked riders, disarm banded marauders, disband White Leagues, disown all toleration of violence, discontinue the bloody assizes of the Democratic party." * *

"Build, mend, heal, sow, plant—in short, go to work; do not feel above honest toil, quit idling and wrangling over politics; let a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, and exact an equal rights for all, be the rule; dwell together in Christian charity, and all will soon be well."

He concludes his magnificent argument with the following eloquent peroration:

"Mr. President, I have been speaking of history—the history of Louisiana. It is the statesman's task to turn history into philosophy and prophecy. The modes adopted in New York and Louisiana are widely unlike; there is a broad difference between them. Whence comes this difference? In what is it rooted? Four million black men are the great factor in the problem. When the fate of the nation trem-

bled in the wavering balances of war, they struck no blow at the Republic; they stood by the flag; they prayed for it; they toiled for it; they fought for it. The American people said they should be free and be citizens; and the American people imbedded their will in the bulwarks of the Constitution. The nation forgave its enemies, and left the ballot and the right of self-government to them. But the same nation, at the same time, conferred the ballot and the right of self-government on those who, galled by centuries of oppression, had still been true in the supreme hour, and had won their liberty and their citizenship on gory fields of battle. Congress did not do this. The people did it. The people in the States, speaking through their State Legislatures, put manhood, citizenship, the ballot, and equal rights for black men into the Constitution.

"There stand the amendments of freedom. The nation is for them; civilization is for them; humanity is for them; God is for them; and political parties and revolutionists shall not prevail against them. A great body of men in the land is not for them, but against them. A great body of men in the land will not submit to them. Social equality is no part of them, but hate and pride rebel against them. This is the moral rebellion of to-day. Drop it in good faith, man-like, and the South will be tranquil in half a year."

14. FREEDOM—SUFFRAGE.

The first Copperhead Legislature of New York, elected after the adoption by a loyal Legislature of the Fifteenth Amendment, attempted to repeal and rescind the ratification of that amendment by the State. Of course this attempt had no legal effect. But Mr. C. could "remember only with unmingled regret that this unworthy fling at a poor and suffering race" came "from the great and patriotic State, whose honor and interests" were so dear to him. Hence, in the Senate, February 22, 1870, (Washington's birthday,) Mr. Conkling, after disposing of the legal issue involved, remarked:

"When emancipation was proclaimed, the charioteers of Democracy plied whip and spur to trample down all who would allow black men even to fight or to work under the flag of the nation. * * * * *

"Truth and common sense were hooted and buffeted, and unkenneled cowardice and ignorance barked in hideous

chorus. Wantonness and infatuation ruled the hour. Drugged with error, dizzy with fear, and maddened with passion, men and women were led from meetings to mobs; from a dance of faction to a dance of death. In the city of New York, duped and imbruted thousands rioted in blood—the blade, the bullet, and the cup, did each its work, and the torch sent up from the Christian soil of that imperial city the smoke of a burning orphan asylum, to tell in heaven of the inhuman bigotry, the horrible barbarity of man. Emancipation prevailed, the uplifted banners of oppression and revolt went down, and the nation's flag waved safe conduct to black and white alike, from Mexico to British America. * * * *

“The objection, we are told, is that ignorance will be introduced into the ballot-box, and the suffrage will be cheapened and degraded! Is not that a masquerade where managers of modern Democracy appear as the champions of an uncontaminated and immaculate ballot? How will history christen the occasion on which the chiefs of the society of Tammany assume the role of defenders of the ballot-box against ignorance and vice? Such a proceeding cannot be a drama; grim enough for tragedy, it would be hooted as ironical; too grotesque for comedy, it would be hissed as an extravagance. Sextus as a vestal virgin, Shylock as a philanthropist, Satan as a reformer, wolves as Shepherds! If these personations be not easy and natural, what shall be said when the managers of the Democratic organization in the city of New York personify the purity and preservation of elections?

“The fifteenth amendment * * * will give the ballot in the State of New York to seven or eight thousand men. These few will be endowed with political rights amid the scowls of multitudes. Some of them may be ignorant and debased, but not one is less deserving of a vote or of respect than those who, themselves depraved, have been organizers and architects of depravity. This is a truth for which the Constitution is a fitting place—the *birthday of Washington a fitting time.*”

15. FREEDMENS' BUREAU—COLORED SOLDIERS—LOYAL CLAIMS.

In the struggle of 1866 with Andrew Johnson for the continuation of this bureau, established in 1875, Mr. CONKLING's influence, voice, and votes stand recorded until its triumphant adoption over Johnson's veto of July 16, 1866. Under the circumstances, in the helpless condition of the

colored people, deprived by the rebellion of their homes and all support, he regarded it as an institution demanded by humanity and justice.

When "tender-footed" Republicans were deprecating the enlistment of colored men as soldiers, when Copperheads were denouncing it as a degradation of the military service, Mr. CONKLING caused to be read before the House a paper (prepared for him by the son of Alexander Hamilton from the papers of his father,) vindicating their enlistment by a history of parallel instances in the Revolution by Washington and Congress, under promises of freedom and political rights. Their enlistment received his hearty concurrence, influence, and votes.

16. FREEDOM—JUSTICE—HUMANITY.

Such is ROSCOE CONKLING—such his record as a statesman, a patriot, a friend of humanity. Entering Congress in 1859, proclaiming Freedom and Justice—Equality—as the immutable laws of civilization and of God—as the only enduring foundation or forces of democratic government; challenging treason, marshaled in its impunity and strength, and execrating it and its crimes before the world; rejecting and reprobating with indignation and scorn all compromise, all alliance or league, with oppression or tyranny—with the cruel and bloody old Moloch, slavery!

In 1862 voting with Lovejoy to extirpate the old Moloch wherever the nation owned a foot of land; to aid West Virginia, Maryland, and Missouri in banishing its destructive and obscene rule forever from their soil; supporting, applauding, and vindicating Mr. Lincoln's Proclamation of Freedom of January 1, 1863, as he did emancipation and suffrage in the District of Columbia—as he did every other measure of the last sixteen years of Freedom, Humanity, and Justice; vindicating by his influence and his voice, with all his eloquence and power—by his votes—in Congress and before the country, in the Thirteenth, Fourteenth, and Fifteenth Amendments, the uprooting and extirpation of slavery forever from the soil of the Republic, the establishment of equality and justice,

and exacting in the organic law a comprehensive bond for their maintenance in the forces of suffrage and political power; demanding, vindicating, and forcing, with Lincoln, Grant, Sumner, and Morton, the establishment of civil with political rights: all powerful guarantees that the laws of civilization and humanity—the laws of God—shall rule forever hereafter in the public and domestic life of the nation!

Where will we find a record of equal consistency or force?

Let it not be forgotten that the great conflict is one for human rights—of “liberty” against “oppression,” of “democratic government” against “the foes of freedom and equality”—the old, old battle—as old as civilization itself, and will endure till the end of time, exacting vigilance, “eternal vigilance,” as “the price of liberty.” In that great battle who has maintained or defended the great charters of human freedom, the magnificent triumphs of civilization and justice, longer or with profounder ability, with greater eloquence, with sterner resolution, or a higher or nobler purpose than ROSCOE CONKLING—not as a mere partisan, not in pursuit of wealth, or popularity, or personal strength—frequently, indeed, to the peril of all—but because, in themselves, they were right—divine, beneficent and just—the mighty forces or agents of civilization and material power in the rehabilitation of the nation out of the destructive and frightful ravages of the accursed old Moloch, domestic slavery!

What champion now living can be placed in rivalry with ROSCOE CONKLING?

Does he not deserve well of the Republic, of the Republican party? The embodiment and incarnation of its creed and triumphs, who more deserving to wear its laurel crown—who at this crisis, in the approaching struggle, to represent and personify its victories over defeated, baffled barbarism, tyranny, and crime?

17. THE CRISIS—THE PERIL.

None who intelligently read the signs of the times—none who have studied the progress of events during the last ten

years—can doubt that an alarming crisis shadows the nation; that a great peril menaces the Republic, and threatens with overthrow and destruction the great bulwarks of freedom and human rights, wrested at such a prodigious cost of treasure and life from the hosts of slavery—Democracy. The old battle is renewed in the struggle of 1876; all the old issues are at stake—freedom or slavery, tyranny or justice—the old battle so eloquently portrayed by Milton in “Paradise Lost”—the old treason of the Fiend—is upon the nation; the traitors are in council—all the “Princes of Hell” in “Pandemonium” assembled; Moloch, as ever, is for war, “open war,” but the indolent and wily Belial, the mercenary Mammon, the astute and adroit Belzebub, all as malignant and cruel as Moloch, but more politic, counsel strategy and wiles, duplicity and fraud. In the battle of the Democracy their council will prevail, but their ends and aims are those of Moloch’s: their victory will be that of despotism, tyranny, destruction, ruin!

In such an hour, in such a crisis, is not ambition, mere personal ambition, criminal? Is not the cry of expediency a fraud—a positive peril? Will not victorious weakness, triumphant imbecility, be as disastrous as the worst defeat? *Remember Andrew Johnson!*

Is not, then, the strong hand, the bold hand, the intelligent hand—genius and strength and impregnable faith combined—the absolute qualifications of the leader of 1876? Not availability—not the brilliancy of the mere debater—not the strategy or cunning of the simple parliamentarian; but the vigilant statesman, strong and untainted in the faith—intrepid, able, far-seeing and sagacious—in the possession and full vigor of all his faculties, physical and mental—for all will be impressed, if not exhausted, in the mighty struggle!

In all these who rivals ROSCOE CONKLING?

